Perinatal Research

UNC now offers multiple research studies for pregnant and postpartum mothers.

The Gut Microbiome & Perinatal Mood/Anxiety Disorders (1st or 2nd trimester)
Would you be willing to help UNC researchers better understand the relationship between depression and anxiety during pregnancy and postpartum and the Gut-Brain Axis?

The purpose of this research study is to analyze the microorganisms residing in the gut of pregnant women and to see if the microorganisms differ in those that develop depression and anxiety during pregnancy or the postpartum period. Researchers from UNC Department of Psychiatry hope to better understand the gut-brain axis in order to better predict those who will develop perinatal depression and anxiety but also develop personalized treatments such as diet recommendations.

You may be eligible if:
• You are in the first or second trimester of pregnancy
• You have not had gastrointestinal surgery (having had an appendectomy or cholecystectomy does not make you ineligible)
• You do not have Irritable Bowel Disease or Celiac Disease

All study visits and medical evaluations related to this study will be provided at no cost to participants. This study requires 3 visits to UNC (in the first or second trimester, in the third trimester, and 6-8 weeks postpartum) and 1 phone visit (about one week postpartum). You will be asked to collect a fecal sample at each time point. At each visit you will: be assessed for depression and anxiety, complete a diet assessment, and have a blood sample collected. A psychiatric assessment will be conducted at the first visit.

You will receive $300 in gift cards for full participation.

To get more information please contact: Hannah Rackers, Study Coordinator (919) 445-2729, or Mary Kimmel at (919) 445-0216 or email mary_kimmel@med.unc.edu

Baby Brain Development Research Study
Help us learn more about early development of baby brain and behavior.

UNC researchers are recruiting pregnant women for a research study of mothers and babies from 3rd trimester of pregnancy to 1 year after baby is born.

We will study 3 groups of babies. These groups are based on their mothers’ use of substances any time during pregnancy:

1. Mothers who used cocaine during pregnancy (alone or with other substances).
2. Mothers who used other substances but did not use cocaine during pregnancy. These substances may include tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, opiates, or others.
3. Mothers who did not use any tobacco, alcohol, opiates, or illegal substances during pregnancy.
***All information collected is confidential***

**Participation includes:**
- Visit for Mom in 3rd trimester of pregnancy
- Brain Imaging (MRI) of sleeping infant’s brain
  - MRI is a safe way to get brain images with **NO radiation or X-ray**
  - **NO sedation or separation** from your infant is necessary
- Interviews, questionnaires & substance use screenings for mom
- Lab visits for mom and baby

Earn up to $420.00 for full participation

**Free Parking or transportation to UNC for study visits**

If interested, please contact:
UNC Mother Infant Research Studies
Phone: 919-843-3419
Email: MotherBabyLab@unc.edu
Visit: www.motherbabylab.com

**Gut Microbiome and Anxiety in Infants (Pregnancy-2 weeks postpartum)**

*Are you pregnant or have you recently given birth? Have you ever wondered why some babies are bold while others are cautious? Join our research study and help us find out why!*

Our goal is to understand how microbes (tiny organisms) living in our gut affect brain development and babies’ responses to new situations. Babies who are very fearful in new situations may be at risk for later psychiatric problems such as depression or anxiety and this could be the result of differences in their gut microbes. Participating children will have a MRI scan of the brain at 2 weeks of age. MRI does not use X-rays or radiation. All children will be scanned while sleeping naturally. We will also collect a small blood sample via heel prick, several samples of saliva (spit), and a urine sample. When your child is 1 year old, we will observe how he/she responds to new people and toys. He/she will also receive a MRI scan at this visit. We will collect a small blood sample via heel prick and spit samples as before. In addition, we will ask you to collect fecal (stool) samples from your child prior to both visits.

Families will receive $200 for each study visit (Potential total of $400) and be reimbursed for travel expenses/gas and parking.

To learn more about this study, please call: Jennifer Prater, Study coordinator (919) 843-5902 or (866) 849-0541 (Toll Free) or contact Dr. Rebecca Knickmeyer, Principal Investigator (919) 966-216
TMS and Postpartum Depression (0-12 months postpartum)

Study Brief: The purpose of this research study is to investigate a new treatment for postpartum depression

You may be qualified if the following applies to you:
- Healthy women between the ages of 18-45
- Between 0-12 months postpartum
- Uncomplicated delivery of a healthy singleton
- Currently depressed - EPDS score >12
- Interested in a non-medical treatment for depression
- Not on antidepressants

Exclusion criteria:
- Past or current diagnoses of bipolar disorder, psychosis, seizures, stroke, severe headaches or traumatic brain injury
- Current diagnosis of substance abuse, eating disorder, PTSD, or active suicidal ideation
- Pregnancy
- Metal or magnetic objects in body

Point of Contact: For more information, contact Brenda Pearson, LCSW at 919-843-8084, or email at bpearson@med.unc.edu

Compensation Available: All office visits, medical evaluations, and rTMS treatments related to this study will be provided at no cost to patients. Childcare may be provided. Participants will receive $250 compensation upon completion of all study visits.

PPD ACT Research App (Postpartum)

PPD ACT is a research app for women who have ever experienced postpartum depression (PPD) or psychosis (PPP.) The goal of the study is to improve detection, treatment and prevention of PPD and PPP by finding the genetic basis of these disorders. Women who participate will download the PPD ACT app, fill out questionnaires and if eligible, submit a saliva sample.

You may be eligible to join if you:
- Are female aged 18 or above
- Have had a live birth
- Have an iOS or Android device

For more information, find us on the web at www.pactforthecure.com, Twitter @pactforthecure, Facebook @PPDAct, email pact.questions@med.unc.edu or find the app in the iTunes or Google Play store by searching “PPD ACT”.

Updated 2/27/18
PMDD Research

UNC Center for Women’s Mood Disorders has research studies available for women struggling with severe premenstrual symptoms. These studies offer free diagnostic evaluation and, for those who qualify, free study-related treatment and/or monetary compensation. All studies are intended to investigate the causes of PMDD and will help guide the development of future treatment interventions.

UNC PMDD Study (Menstrually-Related Mood Disorders Screening)

If you suffer during the week before menstruation from depression, anxiety, irritability or mood swings, and these symptoms are severe enough to interfere with normal functioning or interpersonal relationships – you are not alone! Up to 30% of reproductive age women suffer from clinically significant premenstrual symptoms (PMS).

What is involved?

This research study offers free diagnostic evaluation for menstrually related mood disorder (MRMD) and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). Participation involves 1-2 study visits over 2-4 months. Monetary compensation may be provided, and women diagnosed in this study with MRMD or PMDD may also qualify for other studies providing monetary compensation.

Am I eligible?

We are looking for women who:
1) Are between the ages of 18-52
2) Have mood symptoms only pre-menstrually, and not after the end of menstruation
3) Are medically healthy and not currently taking hormonal or psychiatric medications

Contact us or learn more!

Please visit pmddstudy.web.unc.edu for more information, and to take our 5 minute eligibility survey!

In order to reach a member of our team, you can call or text us at (919) 537-9352 anytime. You can also email us at pmddstudy@unc.edu with questions or for more information.

Updated 2/27/18
Perimenopausal Research

The UNC Center for Women’s Mood Disorders offers research programs to address and explore the needs of women in different stages of menopause.

UNC Changes Study

The purpose of our study is to understand the role of estrogen fluctuation in combination with stressful life events in altering the normal biological responses to stress and, in so doing, triggering depression and anxiety symptoms.

We also seek to examine whether stabilizing the estrogen fluctuation will have a beneficial effect on the biological responses to stress and mood symptoms.

Eligible women will be randomly assigned (i.e. by chance) to either transdermal estrogen (a skin patch containing 17β-estradiol) or placebo (a skin patch containing an inert substance) for 16 weeks. Participants will be involved in the study for a total of 24 weeks. Approximately 6 in-person visits will be necessary over the course of the study. Participants will receive up to $1,275 for participation.

You may be eligible to participate if you are:

- Between the ages of 45 and 60
- Medically healthy
- Having irregular menstrual cycles or skipped periods

For more information, or to see if you are eligible for the Changes study, please call (919)590-0813 or e-mail Terry at terry_edwards@med.unc.edu

You can also go to the study website at changes.web.unc.edu

This study has been approved by the UNC IRB, study #16-1731
The PEERS Study

We are studying how estrogen influences brain function and mood during the transition to menopause.

Participants in this study wear a low-dose estrogen skin patch for three weeks and have 2 brain scans so that we can better understand how estrogen affects brain activity.

You may be eligible if:
• You are between the ages of 44-55;
• Your period has recently become irregular
• Your last period was less than 12 months ago.

Compensation for completing this study is $500. To see if you would be a good fit, please visit www.PEERSstudy.org or call 919-966-5243.